

REMARKS

The Office Actions mailed July 27, 2005 and February 14, 2005 and references cited therein have been reviewed by Applicants.

The Examiner indicated that the Amendment filed on May 5, 2005 was non-compliant since several of the claims included the status identifier "Amended" instead of "Currently Amended". Applicants have corrected this error by this Revised First Amendment.

Applicants have canceled claim 127, amended claims 108, 126 and 128, and added new claims 144-153.

Independent claims 108 and 126 were rejected as being anticipated by Matsen 5,530,227. Claims 108 and 126 have been amended to clarify that the compression force transmitting material engages and supports the shell portion. Claims 108 and 126 also have been amended to require the shell portions to have a hardness that is greater than the compression force transmitting material.

Matsen does not disclose, teach or suggest to one skilled in the art that the compression force transmitting material used to engage and support a shell portion has a hardness that is less than the shell portion. Indeed, the Examiner acknowledged that the material forming the shell and the compression material are the same. As such, Matsen does not anticipate or make obvious the invention as now claimed. Applicants submit that independent claims 108 and 126 and all the claims dependent therefrom are allowable over the cited art of record.

Applicants respectfully submit this application is in condition for allowance and early notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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